

July 12, 2006

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WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon praised U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu (D-La.), Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), Senate Energy Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), and other members of the Senate for announcing their support for Senate legislation opening new areas of the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas production. The bill includes a provision to share oil and gas royalty revenues with coastal energy-producing states.

**"Offshore revenue-sharing is vital for Louisiana's future and I thank Senators Landrieu, Frist, and Domenici for recognizing the importance of this issue," said Melancon. "I encourage the rest of the Senate to move forward quickly in passing this legislation so Louisiana can finally get a fair share of the royalties our support of the energy industry produces for our nation and get to work on a comprehensive hurricane protection and coastal restoration system."**

U.S. Rep. Richard Pombo (R-Calif.), Chairman of the House Resources Committee, added, "When we passed the DOER Act in the House, we proved that a bipartisan solution to offshore energy production is possible. Today's agreement in the Senate represents an important first step in the process. The sooner the Senate passes an offshore production bill, the sooner we can put Americans to work producing energy for the American economy.

"I offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Congressman Melancon for his hard work in advancing this issue and commend him for his dedication to the people of Louisiana."

On June 29, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4761 the Deep Ocean Energy Resources (DOER) Act, which is similar to the Senate bill. Melancon was instrumental in building support among Democratic members of Congress for the DOER Act, convincing 39 fellow House Democrats to vote with him in favor of the legislation, which would provide \$8 billion in new revenue for Louisiana's hurricane protection and coastal restoration system. Melancon and other leading members of the House Resources Committee had negotiated the comprehensive DOER Act from the more than two dozen Outer-Continental Shelf-related bills introduced this Congress. The DOER Act is a bipartisan bill giving coastal states the authority to allow energy production, if desired, and benefit from increased revenue from shared

royalties.

Currently, Louisiana receives only a small percentage of the \$6 to \$8 billion in royalties the federal treasury accrues every year from drilling in federal waters, despite the fact that Louisiana must shoulder the burden of environmental damage, including an eroding coastline, and the cost of infrastructure (ports, highways, etc) that result from the state's support for this industry.

A comprehensive hurricane protection and coastal restoration system in Louisiana would serve to protect the infrastructure that supports 30% of the oil and 25% of the natural gas consumed in the US, as well as 30% of the nation's total commercial fish landings.

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